Kua‘āina Associates
Kua‘āina Associates is a hui of cultural specialists, project coordinators, writers and artists. Its purpose is to conduct activities that bring forth the true essence of Hawaiian and other indigenous cultures.

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The Lifework
and
Collective Song of
Sam Kaha‘i
Kaai

Naue Ka Honua
The Earth Shakes
E Ala Mai lā
Kihanuillūlūmoku
Kihanuillūlūmoku
Awakens

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Naue Ka Honua (The Earth Shakes) - E ala mai iä Kihanuilülümoku (Kihanuilülümoku Awakens) refers to Kihanuilülümoku, the mo‘o god of earthquakes prior to the arrival of Pele and her family, and a relative of Kihawahine the mo‘o goddess of Maui.

The awakening of Kihanuilülümoku represents the growing awareness of traditional Hawaiian thought. This exhibit is a kähea to the people of Hawai‘i nei, to remind us of the importance of our collective kuleana to things that are Hawaiian. Like the awakening of Kihanuilülümoku, it is our hope that this exhibit will awaken you to a deeper understanding of traditional Hawaiian thought in this contemporary time.

— Aloha Pumehana, Kua‘aina Associates
elder. We share the same stories, same values, the same kapu. When I came home I said, I will tell their story. I will tell that I met the younger brothers and their kumara (ʻuala) grows well and their bright eyes shine.

“Thus began a long flowering relationship from which I later invited them to Puʻu Koholā. Today, I am glad to see large groups heading south on a regular basis, and I can vouch for the Maori people’s willingness to share with us from their vast reservoir of intact and living traditions.”

Kalo

“Ultimately, all things must bear fruit. So it is with the kalo and ʻuala. Theʻōō turned the field, but it also turned and agitated our consciousness to reach beyond, to strive and to grow.

“While nurturing the plants, we reflected on our place, our traditions and our responsibilities. Poi not only feeds our family but it also renews and reconnects us with the source… kēia ka pulapula a ʻoukou, we are the offspring of you, the source.

“ʻUa kanu ʻia ka lau ʻuala a ua ʻohi ʻia ka ʻuala
Ua kanu ʻia ka huli a ʻua ʻohi ʻia ke kalo
ʻO mākou nā ʻohā au, ke kumu
A me ʻoe e ulu a māhua ai, pēlā nō mākou nei”

The story is told again and we lau huli, we turn a new leaf. And so the cycle of renewal begins again.”

ALOHA MAI!

Aloha mai e na ohana, na hoa makamaka, a me na malihini no mamao mai! Aloha mai i neia hoʻikeʻike o na mea noʻeau i hana ʻike loea ʻia e kahi kama ʻiʻo o Maui Nui a Kama.

No Kamuela Kahaʻiʻeuanalio Kaʻai neia hoʻikeʻike. He alakaʻi ʻiʻo ʻo ia a he loea iʻo ʻo ia i na mea maoli a kuhohonu o kakou, na Kanaka Maoli nei a o Hawaiʻi a puni.

Mau no ʻo ia i ku kahiko i ko Maui hoʻolina i malama ʻia ai a hoʻomaopopo ʻia ai na mea makamae a waiwai na kupuna mai no kakou ke ola nei a no na pua e hanau ʻia mai ana.

O ka ʻikena loloa keia i loko o ko Maui, ko Hawaiʻi kuamoʻo ʻolelo i ona noʻonoʻo ula a i na hana noʻeau a ke kanaka ʻike loea. No laila, e ke hoa, e komo leʻa mai i hui mai kakou e ʻimi a loaʻa ka ʻike kuhohonu o ka waiwai makamae a keia kama iʻo o Maui Nui a Kama.

“ʻUa ʻimihia ka mano wai o ko Hawaiʻi kupuna”

ALOHA MAI!

Welcome! Welcome family, friends and visitors from afar! Welcome to this exhibit of the talents and expertise of a true and devoted son of Great Maui of King Kamalālāwalu.

This exhibit honors our ancestors through the artistic and cultural achievements and leadership of Samuel Kahaʻiʻeuanalio Kaai in all things Maui, in all things Hawaiian.

Throughout his lifetime, he has striven to measure up to Mauiʻs illustrious heritage in order to elucidate and perpetuate a precious legacy for those presently living as well as for generations yet to be born.

Herein is the long view into Maui’s and Hawai’i’s heritage, a sojourn into the artistic, historical and cultural vision of an exceptional individual.

Therefore, enter and discover the insights and accomplishments of a true son of Maui Nui a Kama.

“The many sources of waters and life of Hawai’i’s ancestors have been sought.”
(The following stories are taken from interviews between Sam Kaha'i Kaai and Moana Swan in 2006.)

E KOMO MAI

The lelehaka and the pū ho‘okani beckon everyone to come and examine what has transpired in Native Hawaiian consciousness over the last 40 years. It is a call to attune us to developments in our Hawaiian consciousness and our Pacific heritage.

“Our songs and stories were becoming misappropriated, getting to be ‘hapa haole’. We were losing the ability to think in Hawaiian terms and concepts. Correspondingly, our material culture fell into disuse, discarded and interesting only because of its association with the past. So the pū ho‘okani calls us to assemble and move forward into our self defined future.”

Ka ‘Ō’ō

“The ‘ō’ō is the digging stick of the field: it breaks up the soil that will receive the ‘ai, the vegetable, the ‘uala or the kalo. Another meaning refers to those who stand in the way of movement. In both instances it means, imua: let’s get in motion, get out of the way, let’s move forward.”

Ho‘oku‘ikahi – To Reconcile as One

In 1989 Sam began to try to interest others in the upcoming 200th anniversary (in 1991) of Kamehameha’s dedication of his “temple of state” Pu‘u Koholā Heiau, in Kawaihae, Hawai‘i.

In 1791, upon the advice of a renowned kahuna, the ambitious military champion Kamehameha, seeking supremacy over his first cousin Keoua Kū’ahu’ula of Ka‘ū for control of Hawai‘i island as well as over other rivals on other islands, restored and rededicated the imposing heiau dedicated to his war god, Kūka‘ilimoku. The re-dedication was rendered ritually successful by virtue of the slaughter and sacrifice of High Chief Keoua Kū’ahu’ula and his entire canoe load of supportive highborn chiefs from the Ka‘ū district.

Remarkably, after nearly two centuries, resentment against Kamehameha still smoldered. A bicentenary observance therefore could not be just a costumed pageant, but would have to address the process of healing historic wounds.

Under Sam’s inspired leadership, participants and volunteers turned out by the score to help make weapons, military and ceremonial garb and paraphernalia, to train as chiefs, warriors, chanters, or helpers, and to assist in making this once-in-a-lifetime historical observance a success. With delegations, participants and observers from Tahiti, Rapa Nui, Samoa and, notably, from Aotearoa, the gathering, the tributes and the meeting of minds, hearts and spirits gave indication that on the weekend of August 16-17, 1991 a reconciliation, a spiritual unification of Hawaiians, did in fact take place.

—Kalani Meinecke

Hoahānau - Cousins

“I have been to Tonga, to Samoa, to Tahiti and many times into the Hivas, the Marquesas. In 1992, at the instigation of the Maori people, I was invited to New Zealand on a Fulbright Scholarship. The program took me to almost all of the tribal areas in the country where I met all the important Maori artists, kahunas and people involved in their culture. On finding out my name is Kaha‘i, a very ancient voyager, it quickly established the connection, for in their tradition Kaha‘i or Tawhaki, is also known.

“I’ve come to look for my ancestors who have gone to live in a colder land. I’ve come to look for where the great Hook of Maui was whirled and thrust into the heavens, and I’m looking forward to seeing the great fish he caught.”

“Under the long white cloud, I found the real people, the tangata Maori of Aotearoa. I have returned many times and seen the great fish that Maui pulled up. Meeting them greatly influenced me; it was a very powerful experience. I learned much and felt a great kinship… and so many times when I turned, there was a face of my grandparent or
Ka Makau

“The makau (fish hook) holds the past while grasping the thread of the future. We need to reach forward using nä mea kapu, those sacred things, those customs and mo’olelo to set the rudder. To look back at the wake of your coming, pick your star in the future and set the steering paddle”.

“The fish hook, like the cross of Christianity, has both a mundane and a spiritual form. In Hawai‘i it is the central philosophical and spiritual symbol. It symbolizes the connection between heaven and earth; it helps us reach to the heavens.

“Cast a hook and catch a star in heaven; hold it fast so that we may partake of the collective ancestral spirit and wisdom and be spiritually sustained.”

“In the mundane, the hook fetches up the secrets of the kai hohonu (deep ocean). Cast a hook and partake of the gifts from below so we may be physically sustained on our life’s journey.”

“Since that time, Hōkūle‘a has made true every traditional mo’olelo; she sailed from Hawai‘i, by way of Rarotonga, to the Kermadecs where the great he’e (octopus) lives, and into the land under a long white cloud. Then she returned making a run to Tonga in 60 mile-an-hour winds. Then to Aitutaki, then easterly, on into the wind, and then came about to land at Tahiti. All the people who dismissed us as accidental drifters were silenced, as an ancient whisper once again found voice. Now from Hawai‘i to Aotearoa to Rapanui, in every corner where the whisper had been heard, it became a living song.

“This is the story of those whose faith never left them, who reached above to take hold of an ancient star. The story is told again and we lau huli, we turn a new leaf. Mahalo mai ka ‘ohana wa’a.”

Hōkūle‘a was conceived, designed and launched in 1975 by Hawaiian artist/historian Herb Kawainui Kane and others of the Polynesian Voyaging Society as an attempt to recover ancient Hawaiian and Polynesian long distance navigation and voyaging seamanship, the first long distance Hawaiian voyaging canoe replica in hundreds of years.
Hökūleʻa

“If you were coming north from Kahiki, across the doldrums and into a new sea, you would notice the sea getting colder, more active and stronger on your way following the Golden Plover. The kōlea is a land bird so you would know there’s land…but how far? At the end of a 31-day run, you would be losing weight, the fish not biting as much, your sails tattered and your lashings weakened.

“Then you would see Höküpaʻa, the North Star, and what you longed for would appear…Mauna Kea, the White Mountain, or the perpetual flames of Mauna Loa.

“In heavenly communion, our spirits jump in ecstasy, and that is depicted in the zenith star Höküleʻa over our heads.”

“For me, Höküleʻa represents renewal in the physical sense. Höküleʻa was launched from the ahu (altar) at Kualoa. One of the meanings of Kualoa is ‘the long memory’…behind you the long line of traditions, the long line of ancestors. So it is the appropriate place from which to be launched and to return.

“Herb Kane stimulated all of this by doing a series of canoe paintings that were seen and felt throughout Polynesia. Here on Maui, I carved the two kiʻi, stern post ancestral figures. Kiha, ka moʻo o malu ʻulu o Lele, represents all the kūpuna. She is a heavenly watcher, a caring spirit, a clear voice of guidance. The other side is Käne o Höküleʻa o ka lani, a man reaching for a star, an effigy of all the ‘ohana waʻa (canoe family).

Mau Piailug

“At the same time, a Micronesian man happened to be in Hawaiʻi and he was asked, ‘You know there is the long wave of the right and the long wave of the left and the great nalu nui—when do you see these things?’ Very quickly, in his quiet voice, he replied, ‘It’s the one come from the true wind; you feel it on your face.’ You have to be far out to sea to feel the wind on your face. Then you will know the true wave that started 2,000 miles away is coming. Then you know nalu nui ʻakau, the true wave of the right, and nalu nui hema, the true wave of the left. Only then will you know the great nalu nui, the true wave.

“So here, an unassuming man from far away murmured these things. This man’s name, Pius Piailug, was too hard for most to pronounce. So, like his own people, we called him Mau, ‘The Strong.’ But he was a giant, the smallest but strongest man we had met in 500 years.

“With a soft voice that was to become ka nunulu i ka lani, ‘the growling in the heavens,’ he changed us forever.” We will not forget him; he is the first father of Höküleʻa, the kahuna who brought the secret of the true waves to us. Now we will add his name to the chants of our illustrious predecessors. His light grows dim, but his canoe made by the family of Hawaiʻiloa awaits him, and we all pray who have learned these things, that he may have his last voyage to take him home.”

Hökūleʻa’s Journeys

“Hökūleʻa left Honolua Bay where the two kiʻi were tied on, and 32 days later passed through the Tuamotu Archipelago. Our arrival in Papeete, Tahiti, was declared a public holiday, and we were greeted by a tumultuous crowd. Lining the shore they welcomed us as their long departed but now returned ‘brothers’. We had indeed re-established the ancient connection

“After returning to Hawaiʻi there was great determination to sail again so in 1978, an attempt was made. I was part of the ship’s company, and during sea trials we turned over. We were upside down for about 22 hours.

“Eddie Aikau went for help on a surfboard, and he became the first sacrifice, our first messenger to heaven telling us this was important and had to be completed. The vessel was towed back to Honolulu, revamped and re-rigged. It took all the will, all the knowledge, all the prayers, and finally on March 15, 1980, we pushed off from Hilo.

“On the island of Raiatea, at Taputapuatea, the central temple for the Society Islands, there were several ceremonies. At one, as a deluge fell while we stood in the water waiting to come to shore, it was uttered, ‘Why have you come here?’ ‘Ah … yes, like today, the heavens came down and pressed hard upon the land after you left from this marae. The

“If you are blinded by the many lights on the byways of Hawaiʻi today, all you have to do is look to the heavens. The stars have shifted constantly, and yet are in the same place upon the appointed hour. They’re solid as the fluid world of Te Moananui (the vast ocean). Everything is changing and yet everything is the same.”